

## **Paradigm Shifts in Cultural Production : Institutionalization of the Nonprofit Theatre Model and the Ford Foundation**

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### **Abstract**

The massive arts grants provided by the Ford Foundation in the 1960s and 1970s were instrumental in institutionalizing nonprofit resident theatres throughout the United States. William McNeil Lowry, vice-president of the foundation's Division of Humanities and the Arts, closely supervised the arts programs of the Ford Foundation for nearly twenty years. Drawing mainly on the archival materials of the Ford Foundation, this article examines not only the institutionalization process itself but also the personal policy and strategies of Lowry, who initiated the first systematic arts funding in the United States. It is shown that the institutionalization process consisted of four dimensions: stabilization of arts organizations, structuration of the theatre world, professionalization, establishment of theatre as a legitimate art genre. It is also suggested that the institutionalization of the nonprofit model in the theatre field paved the way for the diversification of organizational forms in the 1970s.